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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 MOSCOW 002805

SIPDIS

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TAGS: PREL PGOV MARR GG RS

SUBJECT: RUSSIA SIGNS TREATIES OF FRIENDSHIP AND COOPERATION WITH ABKHAZIA AND SOUTH OSSETIA; INSTRUCTS RUSSIAN PEACEKEEPERS TO PREVENT INTER-ETHNIC VIOLENCE

Classified By: Political Minister-Counselor Alice G. Wells. Reasons 1. 4(b) and (d)

**¶11.** (C) Summary. The treaties signed by Medvedev on September 17 with the Abkhaz and South Ossetian leaders give signatories the right to build military infrastructure and bases on each other's territory; call for joint consultations in the event of an attack or threat of attack on any party; provide for dual citizenship; and agree to expand trade, economic and energy integration. Both territories will apply for CIS and CSTO membership, ratcheting up pressure for Russia's neighbors to recognize diplomatically. The MFA told us FM Lavrov instructed the head of Russian peacekeeping forces in South Ossetia to look into and report on claims of attacks on Georgian villages and to take steps to prevent inter-ethnic violence. Russia will look to France for proposals on the particulars of the October 15 security conference, only insisting that Abkhazia and South Ossetia be represented. Moscow does not require that the two leaders approve a renewal of the UNOMIG mandate, but believes they should be allowed to participate in the debate at the UN. We pressed MFA again to return the five U.S. HUMVEEs taken from Poti to U.S. custody. End summary.

Treaties Allow for Bases, Dual Citizenship

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**¶12.** (SBU) Medvedev, Abkhaz leader Bagapsh and South Ossetian leader Kokoity signed Treaties of Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Assistance in Moscow on September 17. The key elements of the Treaties are:

-- Right to build military infrastructure and bases on each other's territory (agreements to be concluded in the future); joint consultations to be held in the event of an attack or threat of attack on any signatory;

-- Joint efforts to protect the national border between Russia and Abkhazia and South Ossetia;

-- Each signatory's citizens to have the right to hold citizenship of the other in accordance with the laws and conditions of the first signatory (agreement to be concluded in the future regulating dual citizenship issues); recognition of each other's passports;

-- Work to attain a high level of economic integration; expand trade and economic cooperation, and integrate energy, transport and telecommunications systems; and

-- Harmonize laws regulating businesses, including civil and tax laws, social benefits and pensions.

**¶13.** (C) Following the signing, Bagapsh and Kokoity announced that they would seek CIS and CSTO membership. Kokoity said South Ossetia would not give up its independence, but would "join Russia by way of integration." In what struck us as wishful thinking, Aleksandr Belkin of the Council on Foreign and Defense told us it was more likely that Russia would eventually let North Ossetia secede and reunite with South Ossetia as an independent state, since "no sane Russian wants

more Caucasians in Russia."

Russia to Investigate, Prevent Inter-ethnic Violence

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¶4. (C) Russia will investigate allegations of attacks on two Georgian villages in South Ossetia and claims that Georgians were being driven out of their homes, MFA 4th CIS Deputy Director Semyon Grigoriev told us September 16. The head of the OSCE humanitarian mission had raised the allegations with FM Lavrov during his September 14-15 trip to the region, Grigoriev said, and had told Lavrov there were only 10 people left in one village and 15 in the other. Lavrov had contacted the Russian head of the peacekeeping force and told him to check into the allegations and to report back to Moscow. Lavrov also told him to take measures to "prevent any cases of interethnic violence," Grigoriev claimed.

¶5. (C) The OSCE head also asked Lavrov to assist in arranging the visit of the OSCE HiRep for National Minorities to Tskhinvali and Georgian enclaves in South Ossetia, according to Grigoriev. Lavrov had asked Kokoity and South Ossetian officials to allow access, which they agreed to do, even though they argued the OSCE had not acted in accordance with its mandate, because they "knew about Georgia's attacks."

October 15 Conference

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¶6. (C) Russia had not yet elaborated views on the conference, Grigoriev said, other than that Abkhazia and South Ossetia should be represented. He said the MFA would reach out to

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the French to get their position on participants, agenda, and other particulars of the conference.

OSCE/UNOMIG Mandates

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¶7. (C) Grigoriev reiterated the GOR position that only the 8 existing OSCE and the UNOMIG monitors could have access to the two regions. He said Russia was not insisting that the mandate for the renewal of the UNOMIG Mission had to be approved by the Abkhaz and South Ossetian leaders, but believed their opinion should be heard and they should be allowed to participate in the debate at the UN. He said he thought Russia would agree to an Arria-style discussion.

U.S. HUMVEES

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¶8. (C) Grigoriev said he would tell "his bosses" that we had raised the issue again, and that they shouldn't "forget about it." He had no new information to provide.

Comment

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¶9. (C) Having the territories apply for CIS and CSTO membership may just be a shot across the bow, but - if actually pursued - will increase pressure on Russia's neighbors to take a stand on recognition. While Russia has denied any interest in pressuring other states to go along with its fait accompli, pushing membership in CIS and CSTO would reflect Russian unhappiness over the reluctance of its neighbors to fall in line with Russian diplomacy.

BEYRLE